

# NORTH WOODS NEWS

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTH WOODS CHAPTER  
OF THE ADIRONDACK MOUNTAIN CLUB

## From our Chapter Chairperson

We've made it through 2020! I looked back at my December 2019 calendar and was surprised how many events I had scheduled as I reached the holiday season. I even remember complaining there was so much to do! Never again!

I will say the North Woods Chapter has done a good job continuing to produce a full Outings Schedule. The first quarter of 2021 looks promising with two activities scheduled every week. I'm excited to have my calendar fill up a bit and to have something to look forward to. Congratulations to Carol and Jim Edmonds! Our club's success this past year, and in the year to come, has relied on them to prepare the Outings Schedule and the Newsletter. While always important to keeping our membership informed, it has been the driving force of keeping us viable in 2020! You're important to us and I know everyone joins me in thanking you.

Also, thank you to our trip leaders. You help us fill the calendar and, for many of us, allow us to coordinate a social life we all crave. Kathy O'Kane will step down as our Director. She has spent her time attending meetings on Zoom working with ADK this past year. Thank you for your time and effort spent in this position. Our Chapter continues to run smoothly in a time when everything is in chaos, it's easy to forget why. It's because there are a few people who feel it's important enough that they volunteer their time on a variety of fronts.

Wishing everyone a Happy Holiday and Happy New Year! We have a lot to look forward to in the coming year - some challenges and some celebrations. Fill your calendar with our many activities and let's enjoy together.

*Gretchen*



*Ascending an Icy Slot  
November 24, 2020*

CHAPTER OFFICERS and  
COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS  
Chairman: Gretchen Gedroiz  
Vice Chair: Kathy O'Kane

Secretary: Susan Omohundro  
Treasurer: Elisabeth Craven  
Director - Kathy O'Kane  
Outings: Carol Edmonds

Conservation: John Omohundro  
Membership: Elisabeth Craven  
Newsletter: Jim Edmonds  
Programs: Marilyn Gillespie

*Editor's Note: This is the last "Director's Report" that this newsletter will publish - because the position of Chapter Director was eliminated with the recent passage of changes to our organization's bylaws - we will no longer have a Director to report to us.*

*For as long as any of us can remember, and probably since the inception of the ADK, each Chapter would elect, from its own ranks, one member to sit on the organization's Board of Directors. This group, like any such Board, would determine the policy, direction and spending of the organization. Every member of the ADK, through their Chapter Director, had direct access to, and potentially influence on, the operation of the Adirondack Mountain Club.*

*The recent changes in the bylaws created a "New", smaller, Board of Directors - who will effectively control the Club. New members of the New Board will be nominated by ... the New Board. New members of the New Board will be elected by ... the New Board. Any individual member of the New Board can be removed from the New Board by (you guessed it) ... the New Board. Control of our Club has been handed to the ultimate self-perpetuating management machine, over which the ordinary membership will have no real or absolute control.*

*So, with the January 1st elimination of the North Woods Chapter's representative on the Club's Board of Directors, there will be no "Director's Report" in future issues of this newsletter.*

## **Director's Report**

*by Kathy O'Kane,*

*North Woods Chapter Representative on the Adirondack Mountain Club Board of Directors*

ADK Board of Directors Meeting - October 3, 2020

Highlights of the Board of Directors meeting include:

- \* 2021 Budget - The Board passed the following 2021 budget:
 

\$4,746,039	Operating Revenue
\$4,682,672	Operating Expense
- \* As we all have noticed there has been increased activity in military flights over the Adirondacks in 2020 - some contributed by other states and some from New York specifically Fort Drum. With respect to a Fort Drum proposal to increase use of helicopters, several agencies and groups, including ADK, have called for a more rigorous analysis of low-level flights over the Forest Preserve than had previously been agreed to by the State, the United States, and other stakeholders.
- \* The ADK is supporting a DEC strategic planning initiative to promote the sustainable management of public use in the Catskills Park much like various initiatives for the Adirondacks.
- \* Membership numbers continue to hold steady with an effort to increase chapter outreach and support. Membership households as of 10/31/20 - 17,890 up from 17,357 at the end of 2019.
- \* North Country Operations have shifted to winter operations as of 10/19/20. 40% of campsites stay open in the winter, Educational yurts have been converted to overnight camping since they cannot be used for in person education, and the ADK Loj continues to operate at reduced capacity with bunk-rooms being used as single-family units.
- \* The ADK website will be updated in 2021.
- \* My term as North Woods Chapter Director ends on 12/31/20. With the passage of the new bylaws there will be no North Woods Chapter Director in 2021. Hopefully the newly forming Advisory Council will serve in a 'reporting to the membership' capacity moving forward.

## Conservation Report

by John Omohundro, Conservation Chairman

Our conservation group (have you joined us yet?) has been staying on top of the news about road salt and the Debar Mountain Wild Forest Unit Management Plan (UMP).

The governor signed the Randy Preston Road Salt Act recently, so, over the next three years a committee will hold public hearings, study salt's impacts on the environment, set guidelines for highway departments, and monitor road treatments. Snow and ice clearance will still occur but will be achieved differently. For example, brine might be sprayed before the snowfall, to reduce precipitation from sticking to the road surface. Salt smart, I say (can I copyright that?)

Not often mentioned in road salt news: special machinery will need to be purchased, and plow operators will need to buy into being re-trained. Also not often mentioned: the driving public is going to have to drive more carefully. Noting how poorly the public has responded to masking and distancing to avoid a deadly virus, I worry about this step. If someone has an accident, is it the highway's fault? Should it be?

The Debar UMP (<https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/22605.html>) is going into public hearing phase as I write this. By the time you read it, that phase may be over. In general, the plan is good for those who play out there.

One contentious area: the fine old Debar Lodge on Debar Lake, which some of you have visited on Chapter outings, is slated to be removed and the site made into a picnic area that merely tells of the former lodge. The town and history buffs are quite upset about the possible loss of this lodge, and Adirondack Architectural Heritage is supporting them, in spirit at least.

DEC may go slow on the lodge part of the UMP so something can be worked out. Don't expect the state to pay for anything. This would be a good time for one of those Christmas miracles.

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### The Bard of Birch Street

*The Bard of Birch Street is an  
Adirondack curmudgeon who  
rarely speaks, but when he does,  
his every utterance is in the form  
of a limerick.*

#### To My Favorite Water Bottle

Did you fall out of my pack into snow?  
Did you roll down a hill, vanish below?  
Do you languish in brush  
Or some other stuff such?  
If someone should find you: you're mine! Tell them so!

*The Bard of Birch Street*

## The History Corner

by the History Guy

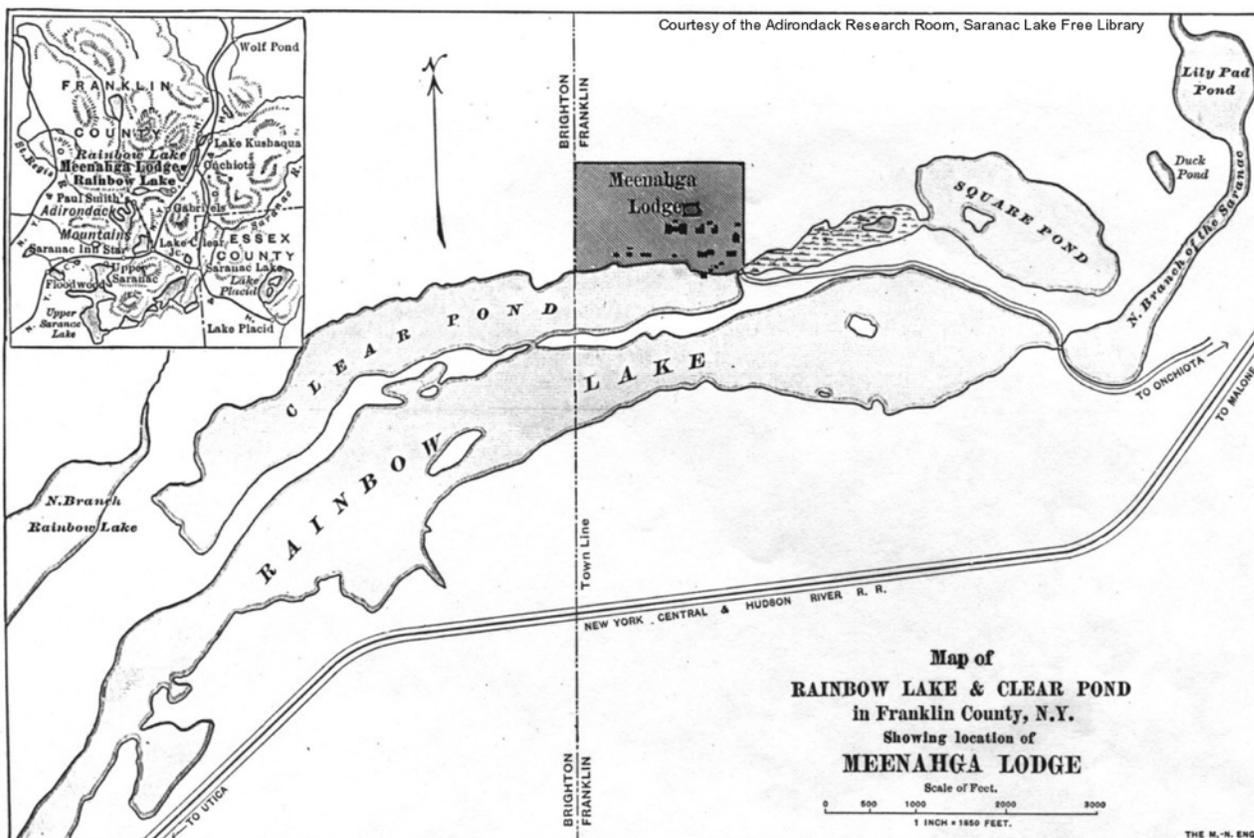
### The Adirondack-Florida School

This is the second report on the history of the Rainbow Lake area. Last newsletter I introduced Wardner's tourist hotel on southwest Rainbow. In this issue we look at a school complex on the northeast shore of Clear Pond, which is separated from Rainbow only by a long, narrow esker.

I learned about the Florida School on a chapter paddle last summer; Kathy O'Kane helps Scott's Florist tend flower boxes on the estate which now owns the school property, and her mention of it whetted my interest.

Lawyer and educator Paul C. Ransom founded the Adirondack-Florida School for boys in 1903, the first migratory, private boarding school in the U. S. From August until mid-December, the boys lived at Meenahga Lodge campus on Clear Pond. The campus consisted of numerous buildings converted from logging facilities: a lodge with public rooms and a library, dormitories, a schoolhouse, kitchen and dining hall, and an infirmary.

*The school buildings on Clear Pond are outlined on this sketch map.*



The school enrolled 25 boys aged 13 to 18, mostly from the Northeast, with a few Midwesterners and South Americans. Six faculty lived on campus to instruct them. With tuition at \$2,400 per year, the boys were recruited only from affluent families, and the preparation helped them to enter the top-tier universities.

Despite the humble origins of the buildings, life for the scholars inside was quite proper. The boys wore jackets

to class, meals, tea, social hours, and chapel. In those pre-climate-change days, plenty of snow fell before Christmas, so students skied, skated, and tobogganed with abandon during their time off from the books.



Courtesy of the Adirondack Research Room, Saranac Lake Free Library

*The classroom building for the Adirondack campus was converted from a lumbering camp structure*

After Christmas, classes resumed at Pine Knot Campus, in Coconut Grove, south of Miami. At Pine Knot they enjoyed, among other amenities, sailing the school's schooner in the Caribbean.

The school continued as a migratory operation until the Meenahga Lodge campus in the Adirondacks was closed in 1949.

In 1954 Olympic swimmer and Hollywood star Buster Crabbe (remember "Flash Gordon" serials?) bought the Adirondack campus and ran a summer camp there until 1974.

The Coconut Grove campus was renamed the Ransom School and survives today.

My source for this was Fred J. Seaver's *Historical Sketches of Franklin Co.*, 1918, reprinted on the Saranac Lake historical wiki.

## The Outings Schedule

The First Quarter Outings Schedule was distributed to all North Woods Chapter members via email on December 16th. If you would like a .pdf version of the Schedule (which will print better than the email version) , or just another copy, North Woods Members can request one by email at [adknorthwoodsnews@gmail.com](mailto:adknorthwoodsnews@gmail.com) . Remember, you can always see the current, up-to-date, sometimes revised and amended Schedule at the website address which is shown on the originally distributed Schedule.

Note: Due to our current circumstances, the potluck suppers have been suspended for this quarter. In addition, we will not have an annual meeting this year. Contributions will be put on hold until we can meet together again.

## A Safety Note for Winter Hikers

from the Outings Committee

When making your plans, please keep in mind that winter hikes often take far longer than summer ones. Good conditions at the trailhead are not a good indicator of conditions for the whole trail. It is not unusual to encounter bare ground, ice and deep snow all on the same trail. Be prepared for it all. Give yourself plenty of time. Do not join a group if you have an early appointment in the afternoon. It is never wise to hike alone, but it is especially dangerous to turn around early and hike back to your car alone in the winter. Remember that darkness comes early in the North Country in the winter. Always carry a flashlight or headlamp. Cell phone flashlights are not appropriate - their batteries discharge quickly in the cold. Many hikers have had to be rescued simply because it got dark and they had no light (often because they were trusting their cell phone as their only source of emergency light). The mountains are fantastically beautiful this time of year, but we must be aware of their challenges.

## TRIP REPORTS .... written by the Leaders of last quarter's Chapter Outings

### October 1, Hike: Nun-Da-Go-A Ridge - Leader: Carol Edmonds

This hike always provides wonderful views, but if you can get in some fall color as well, it is truly great. It is a loop trail, and you can do it either way. We went counter-clockwise so that we would reach the highest point on Weston Mountain first. In this direction you have some relatively flat hiking first, to get to past Lost Pond and take a break at the lean-to there. We were all astonished by how low the water was on Lost Pond, but it was still a pleasant stopping point. The climb up to Weston Mountain is a bit of a scramble, but you are rewarded with the first of many awesome views. There were a few grumbles from those who had hiked it before in the fall that the colors were not quite at peak, but



it was a very fine sight anyway. Then we wandered across the ridge with the outlook slowly changing as we passed many open ledges. Eventually we headed down. I must admit that I had not remembered just how steep the descent was in places, but we managed to stay on the trail and to successfully negotiate it. Ironically, the one injury we had (a bruised elbow) happened when we were off the ridge and dealing with slippery leaves on a somewhat flatter section of trail. Although the parking lot was full and overflowing onto the road, our trail was not particularly crowded. We didn't see anybody for the first half of the hike and only a few people later. I guess most of the hikers were tackling Hurricane or the Crows, both of which start at the same spot.

### **October 2, Hike: *not* Blueberry Mountain - Leader: Tom Donovan**

This hike did happen, but with a caveat. I suspect that I scared some people off with the degree of difficulty I'd mentioned in the Outings Schedule. Some folks inquired, some signed up and then bailed because of the weather, concerns about difficulty, and so on. Bottom line: I had one participant. We ended up doing The Crows instead of Blueberry Mountain, starting from the trailhead on Hurricane Road. We had showers for half of the hike, but rain jackets did the trick. We missed any heavy rain. Nice hike, and nice to catch up with Jackie.

### **October 5, Hike: Coney Mountain - Leader: Barbara Hollenbeck**

Fall has peaked early this year, so we feared that the hike might be less than impressive. But there was nevertheless still a beautiful view from the peak, with plenty of fall colors in every direction. We met several parties of two on the trail, and I am happy to report that everyone was polite about the deployment of Covid masks. After we had settled for lunch at the peak, a large group of teenagers came along. Luckily, there was plenty of space there to spread out. Turns out they were the senior class from Hammond NY on a school field trip. As we watched the rain approach from a distance, it seemed to be arriving earlier than had been predicted, so we decided to pack up and start back down. By the time we got close to the bottom, there were a few light sprinkles making their way through the leaves. By the time we were in the car and on the way home, windshield wipers were necessary. That was close timing. But it was an enjoyable hike all the same.

### **October 7, Hike: Cobble Ledge - Leader: Kathy O'Kane**

As we ambled along the trail to Cobble Lookout, we kicked leaves and said hello to the many people who were coming down and those whom we let pass on their way up. Hardly a solitary Tuesday hike. We found a nice ledge for ourselves to sit on and have our lunch while discussing the important things in life, such as the difference between an insect and an arachnid, and whether the color of the leaves was more brilliant this weekend or last. A leisurely descent after a short but thoroughly pleasing Fall day in the woods.



### **October 9, Outing: The First Annual North Woods Chapter Golf Tournament - Leader: Kathy O'Kane**

On a brisk morning the six golfers approached the first tee with tournament trepidation, and after a bit of confusion about who was on whose team, the first golf shot was taken. The crowd went wild as we approached each tee box and sank each putt. We scored a total of 3-and-a-half holes-in-one (Jim had a bold, indeed magnificent shot that landed squarely in the hole, only to pop back out again . . .—hence the one-half). We completed the 18 holes, and when the final scores were tallied, the leaderboard showed that the Odd-numbered team had beaten the Even team by one stroke. The group adjourned to The Cottage for lunch and good conversation.



### October 14, Hike: Castle Rock - Leader: Kathy O'Kane

Fall days are for cooler temperatures, sunny days, and falling leaves. The 10 of us who climbed Castle Rock had all three. Leaving the railhead behind, we made steady upward progress on a gentle woodland trail. At the intersection with the trail coming up from Blue Mountain Lake, we started up on a trail that got markedly steeper as we climbed over rocks and tree roots. After stopping at some amazing rock formations for a bit of cave exploring, we made the final climb to the summit, squeezing between two rocks. We were rewarded with a beautiful view of Blue Mountain Lake and the surrounding vista. We spread out in the sun and ate our lunch, one of us discovering that he (himself, not his lunch) was being nibbled on by a chipmunk. Descending back between the two rocks that protect the summit, we took the loop trail that offers a gentle hike downward through a predominantly beech-tree forest that had turned yellow as a fall foliage offering. Passing Chubb Pond, we returned to the trailhead, wrapping up this [pleasant 3+ mile hike.

### October 15 and 22, Hike (2 sections): Poke - O - Moonshine - Leader: Elisabeth Craven

We had a beautiful day on the 15th for the first of our two iterations of this trip, with temperatures in the upper 70s and a good view, if a little hazy, of the Green Mountains. It was extremely windy, though, so we had lunch on a ledge a little further down, from which we could still admire Lake Champlain, what was left of foliage color in the valley, and Whiteface to the west.



The outing on the 22nd was also held on a nice day, if a little cloudy, with temperatures in the more seasonal low 50s. On the second outing we were able to have lunch on the summit. Both trips were wonderful fall days in the woods, with 5 and 4 participants respectively. It was easy to "socially distance"!

**October 22, Bicycle Ride: Tupper Lake to Bog River Falls - Leader: Linda Roesner**

After two postponements owing to inclement weather we set out on an overcast, cool day with some sprinkles of rain. But we four cyclists were happy just to get out on our bikes. After assembling at the Moody Boat Launch, we cruised down Route 30 and enjoyed the many views of Tupper Lake. We turned onto Route 431 and soon reached our destination: Bog River Falls, where we had a snack and climbed down to the river to get a good look at the Falls. The water level was low enough that one of our group was able to hop across the river on the rocks. On the ride back to Tupper Lake we encountered heavier traffic, including some large trucks. Just as we reached the parking lot at Moody, it began to rain. We were pleased that we had arrived when we did!

**October 28, Hike: the Pine Ponds - Leaders: Kathy O'Kane, Susan and John Omohundro**

We had explored the waters of East and West Pine Ponds earlier in the summer and decided to return to explore the surrounding area. We traversed some 4.8 miles, and viewed five ponds all told: East and West Pine Ponds, Rock Pond, Federation Pond, and Anniversary Pond. The trails were easy to follow despite being covered with leaves, and although, as the Scots would say, "it was a wee bit of a dreich day", we enjoyed our walk in the wet woods. Lunch was a standing affair at the small waterfall created by the fish dam between the outlet from West Pine Pond and Rock Pond. We discovered some places to which to return, some by canoe and others by foot, and thought the trails might be suitable for a future snowshoe.

**October 31, Paddle: St Regis River and Lower St Regis Lake - Leaders: Linda and Edward Roesner**

This paddle was twice postponed as we waited for a day that would be both hospitable to a mid-autumn water outing and that was "open". As a consequence of the delay our participants shrank from a full roster of 10 plus 5 on the waiting list to the hardy 6 of us who put their boats into the river nearly two weeks after the trip's original date, the 19th. The weather had turned colder during those two weeks, and the temperature had dropped to 12 the night before we set out, so we started later than usual, at 1 p.m., by which time the thermometer registered a balmy 36 with light winds and decent sunshine. We paddled upstream from the put-in opposite the Black Pond parking lot on the Keese Mills Road, poking about in some of the little bays that we usually just pass by. When we reached the lake, we turned north and explored the bays and channels there, areas often ignored by paddlers. The leaders were struck by how much the water level had risen since we were last over there, in early September, when what are now expanses of open water were marshy wetlands with constricted paddling options. We were all struck by the ice we saw beginning to form in the wetland areas and quieter parts of the north bays, ice that deterred our efforts to follow the channel that led off the bay and under Keese Mills Road to points beyond. Returning to the lake proper, we pulled in at Peter's Rock for a stretch and snack, and were entertained by the flock of gulls that quickly gathered, demanding edible tribute. We noticed there that the wind had distinctly freshened, so it was decided that we would not continue on to the Slough, but instead would make our way back downstream to our take-out. A most pleasant late-season paddle (but hopefully not the last), 5 miles in all.

**November 5, Hike: Bridgebrook Pond - Leader: Barbara Hollenbeck**

We had a good turnout for this hike, 9 people. While driving on Route 30 toward the trailhead, two fighter jets flew very low over our heads. That certainly got our attention! Although the temperature was in the low 60's, snow remained on the ground from the recent substantial dumping. At the start we realized that walking required careful attention to footing, and sure enough there were a few unpleasant slips on the hilly sections. It was agreed that the warm wet snow would only have clumped on microspikes, so we just kept on trucking. It was obvious that numerous deer had been walking all around the area. The trail followed along the shore of Black Pond, and later crossed the outlet of an old overgrown beaver dam. There are many very large trees in

this area, and we admired them, wondering about their possible ages. The sunshine during our lunch overlooking the pond was comfortably warm. On our return one lone downy woodpecker was the only wildlife spotted for the day. Since we hadn't gone down the hill to Black Pond on the way in, we decided to take a closer look at its shore on our way out. There we spotted several very fresh paw prints of what we believe to be a fisher. That was an exciting find! At the end of the outing we were glad that all the cars were able to get free from the soft snow in the parking area (some managed this more easily than others).



### **November 12, Hike: Silver Lake Mountain - Leaders: Susan and John Omohundro**



This joint outing with the Laurentian Chapter in the end had no Laurentians, probably because we had to postpone the trip to move it away from Veterans' Day. But nine North Wooders ventured out in the 40-degree weather. Driving to Silver Lake seems to take forever; no wonder fewer people hike it than hike Cascade. To our delight the breezes were blocked where we sat on the ledges of Silver Lake Mountain and watched Whiteface emerge from the clouds. We think we spotted Vermont's Green Mountains, also, off to the east. A flock of crows kept an eye on us. A brief caravan to the other side of Silver Lake for our stroll on the bog boardwalk to the lookout over Silver Lake for lunch. We heard and saw one loon. By then the ceiling had lifted, so that Catamount, Esther, and Whiteface all shone in their glory.

### **November 16 and 29, Hike (2 sections): Split Rock to Champlain Overlook - Leader: Elisabeth Craven**

The weather was marginal on the first outing, but the temperatures were in the 40s and acceptable enough. It had rained recently, so we hit the usual wet spots, places still difficult to get around due to a major blowdown a couple of years ago. We again had trouble finding the lookout, and instead we had lunch on an outcropping. Despite the clouds the view over the lake and the Green Mountains was expansive. As we were leaving our lunch spot, we ran into the regional ranger, Brian Dubay. We seized the opportunity to ask him to show us the overlook, and he admitted that he often got confused himself owing to an enormous tree that had fallen across



the trail. So he showed us, mission accomplished at last! For the second outing we again had temperatures in the 40s, but a crystal blue sky this time, and no wind. We found our destination after beating around the downed tree, and enjoyed the view from the overlook. The vistas were actually a little hazy due to the blazing sun, but it was good to soak in the warmth. On our way back we heard the sound of chain saws: two DEC employees were cleaning up the blowdown I mentioned at the

beginning of this report. Those who have gone on this hike will recognize that it is the wet area near the stone bridge - our tax dollars at work! I will be curious to see next time I am out there whether the enormous downed tree will have been worked on as well. Barbara did some investigative nut and bark research, and also drew our attention to a hooting owl, a treat! Thank you, Barbara.

### **November 19, Hike: Snow Mountain - Leader: Tom Donovan**

Six of us started the hike at the trailhead right off Route 73. We crossed Deer Brook about 4 times. The water was not deep, but it was flowing fast, and rocks very icy in spots—a little treacherous for us old folks, but we all made it without any disasters. It's a fairly steep climb until you get to the road (the High Water Route). The trail continues as a moderate climb before passing a couple of waterfalls and crossing a bridge to finish the climb to the summit. It was pretty windy on top, but we had good views of the Great Range and Giant, among others. We had lunch a little way down the trail to get out of the wind, and there we had a great view of Rooster Comb. We took the High Water Route down to avoid any creek crossing disasters. A good day, with good company!



### **November 24, Hike: Cathedral Rock - Leader: Carol Edmonds**

Although it was cloudy as we gathered in Lake Placid for our hike, a brilliant blue sky greeted us at the Ausable Club and stayed with us all day. We caravanned over to the trailhead, and all managed to find parking spots, notwithstanding the fact that the lot was pretty full. In spite of this, we never saw another soul for our entire hike. The first half mile along the Ausable River was scenic (and windy). Once we started up the trail to Cathedral Rock, the wind disappeared. The trail is flat at the beginning, but it soon starts uphill, climbing moderately at times and steeply at others. The reward for this effort is a walk through a valley that features huge rock faces and gigantic boulders. It is a photographer's dream, and we stopped frequently to snap photos or just admire the scenery. Eventually we came to a trail junction with a sign pointing to the right and saying "Don't Miss". We heeded this advice and started climbing along the base of a huge cliff, eventually coming to a narrow slot in the rocks. We knew the best view was at the top of the slot. However, we also noticed that one of our hikers was missing, which sent the leader scurrying back down the trail to the junction to retrieve her. It seems she had stopped for a short snack and had lost sight of the group. Now together, we studied the slot.

(Please see photo on page 1.) Of course, it turned out to be not only steep, but also icy. One of our members sensibly decided to forego this challenge, but the rest of us stumbled on. It took a long time, and a climbing rope besides, but we all managed to ascend to the top, pushing and pulling each other along. The view on the ledge where we had lunch was outstanding as we looked across the valley at Noonmark, Round, Dial, and Nippletop Mountains. Then we faced the challenge of getting back down the slot, but we found it a bit easier with gravity on our side, and managed to descend with no injuries. Now we headed down to the trail to Cathedral Rock, an impressive cliff face resembling a spire. Our challenges were not over yet, as we had to make some tricky stream crossings below a very pretty waterfall. From this point it was downhill to the Ausable River and a walk back to the sign-in shack. Now that the trail was no longer slippery or steep, the leader managed to fall down twice, injuring only her pride. Although there was some grumbling that the trail was both longer and steeper than advertised, it was still a great day in the woods.



### December 2, Walk: the Flume Trail - Leaders: Susan and John Omohundro



This was supposed to be a “Stoic Walk”: we were to venture out into whatever miserable weather we’d be handed, because it would be better than staying at home and feeling sorry for ourselves. But it failed, because we had a good time. The sun even came out for a short while, although mostly it snowed. The Flume trails were built for mountain bikes, but there were no bikers today, just us. With all the leaves down the young beech/birch woods seemed very parklike, affording long vistas. We admired the green “cedar”, “princess pine”, and “wolf teeth” ground cover beside the trail, and investigated the large woodpecker holes in the rotting birches and pines. The first leg of our walk was beside the roaring Ausable River, while in the middle we were high on the hillside looking out into the Wilmington Notch.

### December 8, Hike: Mount Jo - Leader: Carol Edmonds

The weather forecast predicted that the day would be cloudy and cold. It was cold, true, but there had been no mention of the fact that snow would be falling out of the clouds. This did not seem to discourage anyone, though, and we had a group of 10 for the hike. We did not have any problems with parking - I guess a cloudy day in the shoulder season is not a very popular time for some folks to go hiking. We took the short trail up. It

may be short, but it is also steep and rugged, with some scrambling required. Be that as it may, we all made it with no problems. Trail conditions: hard packed snow with ice underneath in places. This was not an issue for us, however, because we all had microspikes or stabilicers, and we wore them for the entire hike. Unfortunately, there was not really any view from the top, as all the mountains were covered in clouds. Nevertheless, we all enjoyed our lunches and found it to be interesting to stand on the edge of a void. On the way down we took the long trail. As is often the case, there were several icy stretches,,which we were able to navigate over or around easily. For the entire day we saw only 3 other people on the trail, one coming down and two at the summit.

